

Mcdougal Littell
American Literature
Term I

Selection 1: Unit 1, Early American Writing

**from The Interesting Narrative of the
Life of Olaudah Equiano**

Slave Narrative by Olaudah Equiano p.78



notable quote "Every new thing that I observed I treasured up in my memory."

Did you know that Olaudah Equiano . . .

- was a best-selling author in Britain?
- owned slaves in Central America?
- married an English woman and raised two daughters?
- died a wealthy man?

Soldier, sailor, North Pole explorer—Olaudah Equiano led a remarkable life by the standards of any age. Writing as a former slave in the 1700s, Equiano left powerful testimony on the brutality of enslavement that became the model for a new genre, the slave narrative.

Ocean Crossings According to his autobiography, Equiano was born a chief's son in the Ibo (or Igbo) culture of present-day Nigeria. When he was 11,

he was captured and sold as a slave to a series of African masters before making the miserable journey to the Americas known as the Middle Passage. Sold in the West Indies to British navy officer Michael Pascal, Equiano returned to sea with his new owner, who renamed him Gustavus Vassa.

Equiano spent years fighting for Britain, hoping to be freed for good service. Instead, in 1762 he was sold again, to Quaker merchant Robert King, who trained him in business. In 1766, after 21 years as a slave, Equiano bought back his freedom, moved to London, and promptly launched his business career. But by 1773, he was at sea again, first on an expedition to find a northwest passage, and later travelling to Central America and Turkey.

Turning Points In the late 1770s, Equiano returned to London where he got involved in antislavery efforts and converted to Christianity. In 1789, as public debate over abolishing the slave trade began in Britain, Equiano wrote, self-published, and promoted his narrative. Equiano's life story exposed the cruelty of the slave trade and made him an important public figure. He died in 1797, just ten years before Britain abolished the slave trade.

Historians Look More Closely Equiano's narrative includes a wealth of specific details, most of which check out against other sources. But, in 1999, English professor Vincent Carretta uncovered two documents that suggested Equiano was not born in Africa: his baptismal record from England and a ship's passenger list, both of which identify Equiano's birthplace as South Carolina. Historians continue to debate the evidence and how, if at all, it changes the value of *The Interesting Narrative*. Carretta himself points out that even if the narrative is based on the oral accounts of other slaves, its descriptions still provide a valuable portrait of early African life and the Middle Passage.

P.79

Literary Analysis: Slave Narrative

Few of us can imagine what slavery was really like. **Slave narratives**, the life stories of people who survived slavery, help us understand the grim realities of this experience. Olaudah Equiano wrote *The Interesting Narrative* at a time when many Africans remembered their lives before enslavement. Like other 18th-century slave narratives, his work

- portrays the culture shock of a newly captured African
- focuses criticism on slave traders, not slave owners
- includes religious and moral appeals against slavery

As you read, note how the author develops these topics.

Reading skill: Analyze Details

Equiano's readers had little contact with slavery. He chose powerful **descriptive details** to bring the experience to life. *The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us.*

To reach his readers, Equiano uses

- **sensory details**, ones that appeal to the five senses
- descriptions of his own reactions
- **anecdotes**, brief stories that support his points

As you read, use a chart like the one shown to record effective examples of each kind of detail.

Sensory	Details	Reactions	Anecdotes

What does it mean to be a slave?

KEY IDEA From the 1500s to the 1800s, millions of Africans were enslaved to work in the Americas. Their experiences have been documented in books and portrayed in films. What do you know about the realities of **slavery**?

TEST YOURSELF Decide whether each statement is true or false. Think about the facts or impressions that helped you choose your answer.

SLAVERY: Fact or Fiction

1. Slavery was a common practice in Africa.

True False

2. No Africans participated willingly in the slave trade.

3. Most enslaved Africans were brought to North America.

4. Captured Africans were packed like cargo into slave ships.

5. Slave traders typically sold families as a single group.

Vocabulary in Context

Equiano used the following words in his argument against slavery. Restate each phrase, using a different word or words for the boldfaced term.

1. **copious** amounts of rain, causing a flood

2. the **nominal** boss, but with no real authority

3. her **countenance** betraying her fear

4. cruel rulers acting without worry or **scruple**

5. to our **consternation**, revealed all our plans

6. deadly effects of **pestilential** beetles

The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano

Olaudah Equiano

Background As European colonies in the Americas expanded, so did the slave trade. Slaves were captured in Africa, then taken by ship to the West Indies—a journey called the Middle Passage. For two months, Africans lay tightly chained in storage compartments with hardly enough air to breathe. Millions died from bad food, harsh treatment, disease, and despair. Olaudah Equiano is one of the few to describe this horrific journey.

When Olaudah Equiano was 11 years old, he and his sister were kidnapped while the adults in his village were working in the fields. After being forced to travel for several days, Equiano and his sister were separated. For the next six or seven months, Equiano was sold several times to African masters in different countries. He was eventually taken to the west coast of Africa and carried aboard a slave ship bound for the West Indies.

The first object which saluted my eyes when I arrived on the coast, was the sea, and a slave ship, which was then riding at anchor, and waiting for its cargo. These filled me with astonishment, which was soon converted into terror, when I was carried on board. I was immediately handled, and tossed up to see if I were sound, by some of the crew; and I was now persuaded that I had gotten into a world of bad spirits, and that they were going to kill me. Their complexions, too, differing so much from ours, their long hair, and the language they spoke (which was very different from any I had ever heard), united to confirm me in this belief. **A**

Indeed, such were the horrors of my views and fears at the moment, that, if ten thousand worlds had been my own, I would have freely parted with them all to have exchanged my condition with that of the meanest slave¹ in my own country.

When I looked round the ship too, and saw a large furnace of copper boiling, and a multitude of black people of every description chained together, every one of their **countenances** expressing dejection and sorrow, I no longer doubted of my fate; and, quite overpowered with horror and anguish, I fell motionless on the deck and fainted. When I recovered a little, I found some black people about me, who I believed were some of those who had brought me on board, and had been receiving their pay; they talked to me in order to cheer me, but all in vain. I asked them if we were not to be eaten by those white men with horrible looks, red faces, and long hair. They told me I was not, and one of the crew brought me a small portion of spirituous liquor in a wine glass; but, being afraid of him, I would not take it out of his hand. One of the blacks, therefore, took it from him and gave it to me, and I took a little down my palate, which, instead of reviving me, as they thought it would, threw me into the greatest **consternation** at the strange feeling it produced, having never tasted any such liquor before. Soon after this, the blacks who brought me on board went off, and left me abandoned to despair. **B**

I now saw myself deprived of all chance of returning to my native country, or even the least glimpse of hope of gaining the shore, which I now considered as friendly; and I even wished for my former slavery in preference to my present situation, which was filled with horrors of every kind, still heightened by my ignorance of what I was to undergo. I was not long suffered to indulge my grief; I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life; so that, with the loathsomeness of the stench, and crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat, nor had I the least desire to taste anything. I now wished for the last friend, death, to relieve me; but soon, to my grief, two of the white men offered me eatables; and, on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands, and laid me across, I think, the windlass,² and tied my feet, while the other flogged³ me severely. I had never experienced anything of this kind before, and, although not being used to the water, I naturally feared that element the first time I saw it, yet, nevertheless, could I have got over the nettings,⁴ I would have jumped over the side, but I could not; and besides, the crew used to watch us very closely who were not chained down to the decks, lest we should leap into the water; and I have seen some of these poor African prisoners most severely cut, for attempting to do so, and hourly whipped for not eating. This indeed was often the case with myself. In a little time after, amongst the poor chained men, I found some of my own nation, which in a small degree gave ease to my mind. I inquired of these what was to be done with us? They gave me to understand, we were to be carried to these white people's country to work for them. I then was a little revived, and thought, if it were no worse than working, my situation was not so desperate; but still I feared I should be put to death, the white people looked and acted, as I thought, in so savage a manner; for I had never seen among any people such instances of brutal cruelty; and this not only shown towards us blacks, but also to some of the whites themselves. One white man in particular I saw, when we were permitted to be on deck, flogged so unmercifully with a large rope near the foremast,⁵ that he died in consequence of it; and they tossed him over the side as they would have done a brute. This made me fear these people the more; and I expected nothing less **C** than to be treated in the same manner. I could not help expressing my fears and apprehensions to some of my countrymen; I asked them if these people had no country, but lived in this hollow place (the ship)? They told me they did not, but came from a distant one. "Then," said I, "how comes it in all our country we never heard of them?" They told me because they lived so very far off. I then asked where were their women? had they any like themselves? I was told they had. "And why," said I, "do we not see them?" They answered, because they were left behind. I asked how the vessel could go? They told me they could not tell; but that there was cloth put upon the masts by the help of the ropes I saw, and then the vessel went on; and the white men had some spell or magic they put in the water when they liked, in order to stop the vessel. I was exceedingly amazed at this account, and really thought they were spirits. I therefore wished much to be from amongst them, for I expected they would sacrifice me; but my wishes were vain—for we were so quartered that it was impossible for any of us to make our escape. . . . **D**

At last, when the ship we were in, had got in all her cargo, they made ready with many fearful noises, and we were all put under deck, so that we could not see how they managed the vessel. But this disappointment was the least of my sorrow. The stench of the hold while we were on the coast was so intolerably loathsome, that it was dangerous to remain there for any time, and some of us had been permitted to stay on the deck for the fresh air; but now that the whole ship's cargo were confined together, it became absolutely **pestilential**. The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. This produced **copious** perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration, from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died. . . . This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling⁶ of the chains. . . . The shrieks of the women, and the groans of the dying, rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable. Happily perhaps, for myself, I was soon reduced so low here that it was thought necessary to keep me almost always on deck; and from my extreme youth I was not put in fetters. In this situation I expected every hour to share the fate of my companions, some of whom were almost daily brought upon deck at the point of death, which I began to hope would soon put an end to my miseries. . . . **E**

One day they had taken a number of fishes; and when they had killed and satisfied themselves with as many as they thought fit, to our astonishment who were on deck, rather than give any of them to us to eat, as we expected, they tossed the remaining fish into the sea again, although we begged and prayed for some as well as we could, but in vain; and some of my countrymen, being pressed by hunger, took an opportunity, when they thought no one saw them, of trying to get a little privately; but they were discovered, and the attempt procured them some very severe floggings. One day, when we had a smooth sea and moderate wind, two of my wearied countrymen who were chained together (I was near them at the time), preferring death to such a life of misery, somehow made through the nettings and jumped into the sea; immediately, another quite dejected fellow, who, on account of his illness, was suffered to be out of irons, also followed their example; and I believe many more would very soon have done the same, if they had not been prevented by the ship's crew, who were instantly alarmed. . . .

During the rest of his voyage to the West Indies, Equiano continued to endure hardships. After the ship anchored on the coast of Barbados, Equiano and the other slaves were brought ashore and herded together in a slave merchant's yard to be sold.

We were not many days in the merchant's custody, before we were sold after their usual manner, which is this: On a signal given (as the beat of a drum), the buyers rush at once into the yard where the slaves are confined, and make choice of that parcel⁷ they like best. The noise and clamor with which this is attended, and the eagerness visible in the countenances of the buyers, serve not a little to increase the apprehension of terrified Africans, who may well be supposed to consider them as the ministers of that destruction to which they think themselves devoted. In this manner, without **scruple**, are

relations and friends separated, most of them never to see each other again. I remember, in the vessel in which I was brought over, in the men's apartment, there were several brothers, who, in the sale, were sold in different lots; and it was very moving on this occasion, to see and hear their cries at parting. O, ye **nominal** Christians! might not an African ask you—Learned you this from your God, who says unto you, Do unto all men as you would men should do unto you? Is it not enough that we are torn from our country and friends, to toil for your luxury and lust of gain? Must every tender feeling be likewise sacrificed to your avarice? Are the dearest friends and relations now rendered more dear by their separation from their kindred, still to be parted from each other, and thus prevented from cheering the gloom of slavery, with the small comfort of being together, and mingling their sufferings and sorrows? Why are parents to lose their children, brothers their sisters, or husbands their wives? Surely, this is a new refinement in cruelty, which . . . thus aggravates distress, and adds fresh horrors even to the wretchedness of slavery. ¶

Text Related Questions:

A. SLAVE NARRATIVE

Note Equiano's use of **first-person point of view** in lines 1–8. In what ways might this description be startling to Equiano's mostly European audience?

B. ANALYZE DETAILS

Reread lines 1–26. What details reinforce Equiano's impression that he has been captured by bad spirits?

C. GRAMMAR AND STYLE

Reread lines 54–57. Note how Equiano uses **adverb clauses**, such as “when we were permitted to be on deck,” to modify verbs and adverbs in the sentence.

D. SLAVE NARRATIVE

Look back at lines 48–52. What does Equiano's reaction reveal about the way he regards slavery?

E. ANALYZE DETAILS

What details in lines 75–85 does Equiano use to describe conditions below decks?

F. What point is Equiano making in lines 116–118? To what emotions is he appealing?

1. **the meanest slave:** the poorest or most wretched slave.
2. **windlass** (wGndPIEs): a device for raising and lowering a ship's anchor.
3. **flogged:** beat with a whip or rod.
4. **nettings:** networks of small ropes on the sides of a ship that were used for various purposes, such as stowing sails. On slave ships, the nettings helped keep the slaves from jumping overboard.
5. **foremast** (fôrPmEst): the mast (tall pole that supports sails and rigging) nearest the forward end of a sailing ship.
6. **galling:** rubbing or chafing, enough to produce sores.
7. **parcel:** a group of slaves offered for sale as one "package."

After Reading

Comprehension

1. **Recall** Who has brought Equiano to the slave ship?
2. **Recall** What does Equiano think will happen to him when he is brought on board ship?
3. **Clarify** What does Equiano mean when he refers to "nominal Christians"?

Literary Analysis

4. **Analyze Descriptive Details** Review the chart you made while reading. Identify the details that had the strongest impact on you as a reader.

Why were those details so effective?

5. **Make Inferences About Cultural Context** Equiano portrays himself as an African encountering Europeans for the very first time. By describing his shocked and confused responses to the men of this different culture, Equiano reveals clues about African beliefs and customs. In each example, what inferences can you make about the narrator's cultural context?

- his fears of white men (lines 18–20)
- how he responds to fellow Africans (lines 20–23)
- his questions about the ship (lines 59–68)
- his reactions to cruelty around him (lines 50–57 and 91–95)

6. Compare and Contrast Like Cabeza de Vaca, Equiano describes a journey to the Americas. In what ways does his narrative resemble *La Relación*? Identify at least two similarities and two differences.

7. Synthesize Information Review your answers to the quiz about **slavery** that you took before reading Equiano's narrative. What facts or details in his account most surprised you? Correct your quiz answers to reflect what you learned.

8. Evaluate a Slave Narrative Some historians have questioned whether Equiano's narrative is authentic. Read the information on this debate in the author's biography on page 78. Based on the issues raised, what you have learned about slave narratives, and your own reading, make an argument for or against the historical value of Equiano's account. Support your answer with details.

Literary Criticism

9. Biographical Context In 1775, just 14 years before writing his life story, Equiano bought slaves to work on his Central American plantation. He explained his actions by saying he did what he could "to comfort the poor creatures, and render their condition easy." Do you find this explanation consistent with the views of slavery put forth in *The Interesting Narrative*? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.

Selection 2: Unit 2, The Early Romantics

The Devil and Tom Walker

Short Story by Washington Irving p.310



Washington Irving

1783–1859

notable quote “The almighty dollar, that great object of universal devotion . . .”

Did you know that Washington Irving . . .

- was a spectator at the trial of Aaron Burr?
- served as a colonel in the War of 1812?
- inspired the name of the New York Knicks basketball team?
- lost the love of his life when she died at 17?

The Headless Horseman has thundered through readers’ nightmares for nearly 200 years. Rip Van Winkle has been inspiring laughter for just as long. These characters, along with scores of others that populate his writing, helped make Washington Irving the first American writer to achieve an international reputation.

A Reluctant Lawyer Born when the nation was new and patriotism at its fiercest, Washington Irving was named for the country’s first president. He began studying law at 16 but never showed much enthusiasm for it. He did, however, have a passion for writing, a playful mind, and keen powers of observation. “I was always fond of visiting new scenes and observing strange characters and manners,” he once wrote. In 1807, he began publishing light satirical pieces about New York politics, culture, and theater.

Also Known As . . . In 1809, Irving penned *A History of New York from the Beginning of Time Through the End of the Dutch Dynasty*, a satire of both historical texts and the local politics they chronicled. It was considered a comic masterpiece, but for a time no one knew who had written it—the manuscript was said to have been left at an inn by an old lodger named

Diedrich Knickerbocker. Knickerbocker was one of many eccentric narrators created by Irving, who didn't sign his own name to his works until he was over 40.

American Abroad In 1815, Irving began traveling through Europe, remaining therefore 17 years. With the encouragement of Sir Walter Scott—the author of *Ivanhoe* and a fan of Irving's *History*—he began writing a series of stories that blended the legends of Europe with the tales he had heard while wandering as a young man through New York's Catskill Mountains and Hudson Valley. The stories, including both "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and "Rip Van Winkle," appeared in 1820 as *The Sketch-Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* The collection was wildly successful. However, in 1824, Irving published *Tales of a Traveller* (which contained "The Devil and Tom Walker"), and the book was not well received. In fact, the criticism was so harsh that Irving stopped writing fiction altogether. Irving returned to America in 1832 to live with his brother on the Sunnyside estate. He died at the age of 76 and was buried near the haunting ground of his famous horseman—in New York's Sleepy Hollow Cemetery.

Literary Analysis: Satire

Irving was a master of **satire**, a literary device in which people, customs, or institutions are ridiculed with the purpose of improving society. In this passage, Irving pokes fun at quarrelsome, complaining women:

. . . Though a female scold is generally considered to be a match for the devil, yet in this instance she appears to have had worst of it.

Satire is often subtle, so as you read, watch for its indicators: humor, exaggeration, absurd situations, and irony.

Reading Skill: Interpret Imagery

Through the creative use of **imagery**—words and phrases that appeal to the five senses—Irving develops his characters and establishes mood.

. . . There lived near this place a meager, miserly fellow, of the name of Tom Walker. He had a wife as miserly as himself. . . They lived in a forlorn-looking house that stood alone and had an air of starvation.

As you read, use a chart like the one shown to record images that support the story's characterization and mood.

Images	Characterization	Mood
house with a look of starvation	Tom and his wife are miserly	depressing

Are you willing to pay any price?

KEY IDEA People who'll stop at nothing to achieve wealth, success, or fame are often said to have "sold their soul." In other words, they have sacrificed something important—moral beliefs, privacy, family—in order to get what they want. Consider this kind of trade-off. Do you think it might ever be worth the **consequences**?

DISCUSS Working with a partner, list several people—real or fictional—who fit this profile. Then pick one such person and list his or her gains and their consequences. Assign a value to each item and decide whether, overall, the prize was worth the price. Share your conclusions with the rest of the class.

Vocabulary in Context

The following words are critical to the story of a miser who would trade his soul for money. Check your understanding of each one by rewording the sentence in which it appears.

1. The **melancholy** sight of the graveyard chilled him.
2. The **persecution** of the Puritans went unchallenged.
3. The mention of gold awakened his **avarice**.
4. The corrupt **usurer** charged 20 percent interest.
5. **Speculating** in land deals held the promise of quick profits.
6. Hard economic times are **propitious** for moneylenders.
7. People who flaunt their wealth are guilty of **ostentation**.
8. He was a strict **censurer** of other people's vices.

The Devil and Tom Walker

Washington Irving

Background The story of Tom Walker is a variation on the legend of Faust, a 16th-century magician and astrologer who was said to have sold his soul to the devil for wisdom, money, and power. Washington Irving reinvented the tale, setting it in the 1720s in an area of New England settled by Quakers and Puritans. In Irving's comic retelling of the legend, the writer satirizes people who present a pious public image as they "sell their soul" for money.

A few miles from Boston in Massachusetts, there is a deep inlet, winding several miles into the interior of the country from Charles Bay, and terminating in a thickly wooded swamp or morass. On one side of this inlet is a beautiful dark grove; on the opposite side the land rises abruptly from the water's edge into a high ridge, on which grow a few scattered oaks of great age and immense size.

Under one of these gigantic trees, according to old stories, there was a great amount of treasure buried by Kidd the pirate. The inlet allowed a facility to bring the money in a boat secretly and at night to the very foot of the hill; the elevation of the place permitted a good lookout to be kept that no one was at hand; while the remarkable trees formed good landmarks by which the place might easily be found again. The old stories add, moreover, that the devil presided at the hiding of the money and took it under his guardianship; but this, it is well-known, he always does with buried treasure, particularly when it has been ill-gotten. Be that as it may, Kidd never returned to recover his wealth; being shortly after seized at Boston, sent out to England, and there hanged for a pirate. **A**

About the year 1727, just at the time that earthquakes were prevalent in New England, and shook many tall sinners down upon their knees, there lived near this place a meager, miserly fellow, of the name of Tom Walker. He had a wife as miserly as himself: they were so miserly that they even conspired to cheat each other. Whatever the woman could lay hands on, she hid away; a hen could not cackle but she was on the alert to secure the new-laid egg. Her husband was continually prying about to detect her secret hoards, and many and fierce were the conflicts that took place about what ought to have been common property. They lived in a forlorn-looking house that stood alone and had an air of starvation. A few straggling savin trees, emblems of sterility, grew near it; no smoke ever curled from its chimney; no traveler stopped at its door. A miserable horse, whose ribs were as articulate as the bars of a gridiron, **1** stalked about a field, where a thin carpet of moss, scarcely covering the ragged beds of puddingstone, **2** tantalized and balked his hunger; and sometimes he would lean his head over the fence, look piteously at the passerby and seem to petition deliverance from this land of famine. **B**

The house and its inmates had altogether a bad name. Tom's wife was a talltermagant, **3** fierce of temper, loud of tongue, and strong of arm. Her voice was often heard in wordy warfare with her husband; and his face sometimes showed signs that their conflicts were not confined to words. No one ventured, however, to interfere between them. The lonely wayfarer shrunk within himself at the horrid clamor and clapper-clawing; **4** eyed the den of discord askance; **5** and hurried on his way, rejoicing, if a bachelor, in his celibacy. **C**

One day that Tom Walker had been to a distant part of the neighborhood, he took what he considered a shortcut homeward, through the swamp. Like most shortcuts, it was an ill-chosen route. The swamp was thickly grown with great gloomy pines and hemlocks, some of them ninety feet high, which made it dark at noonday, and a retreat for all the owls of the neighborhood. It was full of pits and quagmires, partly covered with weeds and mosses, where the green surface often betrayed the traveler into a gulf of black, smothering mud; there were also dark and stagnant pools, the abodes of the tadpole, the bullfrog, and the water snake; where the trunks of pines and hemlocks lay half-drowned, half-rotting, looking like alligators sleeping in the mire. **D**

Tom had long been picking his way cautiously through this treacherous forest; stepping from tuft to tuft of rushes and roots, which afforded precarious footholds among deep sloughs; or pacing carefully, like a cat, along the prostrate trunks of trees; startled now and then by the sudden screaming of the bittern, **6** or the quacking of wild duck rising on the wind from some solitary pool. At length he arrived at a firm piece of ground, which ran out like a peninsula into the deep bosom of the swamp. It had been one of the strongholds of the Indians during their wars with the first colonists. Here they had thrown up a kind of fort, which they had looked upon as almost impregnable, and had used as a place of refuge for their squaws and children.

Nothing remained of the old Indian fort but a few embankments, gradually sinking to the level of the surrounding earth, and already overgrown in part by oaks and other forest trees, the foliage of which formed a contrast to the dark pines and hemlocks of the swamp. It was late in the dusk of evening when Tom Walker reached the old fort, and he paused there awhile to rest himself. Anyone but he would have felt unwilling to linger in this lonely, **melancholy** place, for the common people had a bad opinion of it, from the stories handed down from the time of the Indian wars, when it was asserted that the savages held incantations **7** here, and made sacrifices to the evil spirit.

Tom Walker, however, was not a man to be troubled with any fears of the kind. He reposed himself for some time on the trunk of a fallen hemlock, listening to the boding cry of the tree toad, and delving with his walking staff into a mound of black mold at his feet. As he turned up the soil unconsciously, his staff struck against something hard. He raked it out of the vegetable mold, and lo! a cloven skull, with an Indian tomahawk buried deep in it, lay before him. The rust on the weapon showed the time that had elapsed since this death-blow had been given. It was a dreary memento of the fierce struggle that had taken place in this last foothold of the Indian warriors.

“Humph!” said Tom Walker, as he gave it a kick to shake the dirt from it. **E**

“Let that skull alone!” said a gruff voice. Tom lifted up his eyes, and beheld a great black man seated directly opposite him, on the stump of a tree. He was exceedingly surprised, having neither heard nor seen anyone approach; and he was still more perplexed on observing, as well as the gathering gloom would permit, that the stranger was neither Negro nor Indian. It is true he was dressed in a rude half-Indian garb, and had a red belt or sash swathed round his body; but his face was neither black nor copper-color, but swarthy and dingy, and begrimed with soot, as if he had been accustomed to toil among fires and forges. He had a shock of coarse black hair, that stood out from his head in all directions, and bore an ax on his shoulder. He scowled for a moment at Tom with a pair of great red eyes.

“What are you doing on my grounds?” said the black man, with a hoarse, growling voice. “Your grounds!” said Tom, with a sneer, “no more your grounds than mine; they belong to Deacon Peabody.”

“Deacon Peabody be d—d,” said the stranger, “as I flatter myself he will be, if he does not look more to his own sins and less to those of his neighbors. Look yonder, and see how Deacon Peabody is faring.”

Tom looked in the direction that the stranger pointed, and beheld one of the great trees, fair and flourishing without, but rotten at the core, and saw that it had been nearly hewn through, so that the first high wind was likely to blow it down. On the bark of the tree was scored the name of Deacon Peabody, an eminent man, who had waxed wealthy by driving shrewd bargains with the Indians. He now looked around, and found most of the tall trees marked with the name of some great man of the colony, and all more or less scored by the ax. The one on which he had been seated, and which had evidently just been hewn down, bore the name of Crowninshield; and he recollected a mighty rich man of that name, who made a vulgar display of wealth, which it was whispered he had acquired by buccaneering. **8 F**

“He’s just ready for burning!” said the black man, with a growl of triumph. “You see, I am likely to have a good stock of firewood for winter.” “But what right have you,” said Tom, “to cut down Deacon Peabody’s timber?” “The right of a prior claim,” said the other. “This woodland belonged to me long before one of your white-faced race put foot upon the soil.” “And pray, who are you, if I may be so bold?” said Tom. “Oh, I go by various names. I am the wild huntsman in some countries; the black miner in others. In this neighborhood I am he to whom the red men consecrated this spot, and in honor of whom they now and then roasted a white man, by way of sweet-smelling sacrifice. Since the red men have been exterminated by you white savages, I amuse myself by presiding at the **persecutions** of Quakers and Anabaptists; **9** I am the great patron and prompter of slave dealers, and the grand master of the Salem witches.” **G**

“The upshot of all which is that, if I mistake not,” said Tom, sturdily, “you are he commonly called Old Scratch.” **10** “The same, at your service!” replied the black man, with a half-civil nod. Such was the opening of this interview,

according to the old story; though it has almost too familiar an air to be credited. One would think that to meet with such a singular personage, in this wild, lonely place, would have shaken any man's nerves; but Tom was a hard-minded fellow, not easily daunted, and he had lived so long with a termagant wife that he did not even fear the devil.

It is said that after this commencement they had a long and earnest conversation together, as Tom returned homeward. The black man told him of great sums of money buried by Kidd the pirate, under the oak trees on the high ridge, not far from the morass. All these were under his command, and protected by his power, so that none could find them but such as propitiated his favor. These he offered to place within Tom Walker's reach, having conceived an especial kindness for him; but they were to be had only on certain conditions. What these conditions were may be easily surmised, though Tom never disclosed them publicly. They must have been very hard, for he required time to think of them, and he was not a man to stick at trifles when money was in view. When they had reached the edge of the swamp, the stranger paused. "What proof have I that all you have been telling me is true?" said Tom. "There's my signature," said the black man, pressing his finger on Tom's forehead. So saying, he turned off among the thickets of the swamp, and seemed, as Tom said, to go down, down, down, into the earth, until nothing but his head and shoulders could be seen, and so on, until he totally disappeared.

When Tom reached home, he found the black print of a finger burnt, as it were, into his forehead, which nothing could obliterate. The first news his wife had to tell him was the sudden death of Absalom Crowninshield, the rich buccaneer. It was announced in the papers with the usual flourish that "a great man had fallen in Israel."¹¹

Tom recollected the tree which his black friend had just hewn down and which was ready for burning. "Let the freebooter¹² roast," said Tom; "who cares!" He now felt convinced that all he had heard and seen was no illusion. He was not prone to let his wife into his confidence; but as this was an uneasy secret, he willingly shared it with her. All her avarice was awakened at the mention of hidden gold, and she urged her husband to comply with the black man's terms, and secure what would make them wealthy for life. However Tom might have felt disposed to sell himself to the devil, he was determined not to do so to oblige his wife; so he flatly refused, out of the mere spirit of contradiction. Many and bitter were the quarrels they had on the subject; but the more she talked, the more resolute was Tom not to be damned to please her. At length she determined to drive the bargain on her own account, and if she succeeded, to keep all the gain to herself. Being of the same fearless temper as her husband, she set off for the old Indian fort toward the close of a summer's day. She was many hours absent. When she came back, she was reserved and sullen in her replies. She spoke something of a black man, whom she met about twilight hewing at the root of a tall tree. He was sulky, however, and would not come to terms; she was to go again with a propitiatory offering, but what it was she forbore to say. The next evening she set off again for the swamp, with her apron heavily laden. Tom waited and

waited for her, but in vain; midnight came, but she did not make her appearance; morning, noon, night returned, but still she did not come. Tom now grew uneasy for her safety, especially as he found she had carried off in her apron the silver teapot and spoons, and every portable article of value. Another night elapsed, another morning came; but no wife. In a word, she was never heard of more. What was her real fate nobody knows, in consequence of so many pretending to know. It is one of those facts which have become confounded by a variety of historians. Some asserted that she lost her way among the tangled mazes of the swamp, and sank into some pit or slough; others, more uncharitable, hinted that she had eloped with the household booty and made off to some other province; while others surmised that the tempter had decoyed her into a dismal quagmire, on the top of which her hat was found lying. In confirmation of this, it was said a great black man, with an ax on his shoulder, was seen late that very evening coming out of the swamp, carrying a bundle tied in a check apron, with an air of surly triumph. **H**

The most current and probable story, however, observes that Tom Walker grew so anxious about the fate of his wife and his property that he set out at length to seek them both at the Indian fort. During a long summer's afternoon he searched about the gloomy place, but no wife was to be seen. He called her name repeatedly, but she was nowhere to be heard. The bittern alone responded to his voice, as they flew screaming by; or the bullfrog croaked dolefully from a neighboring pool. At length, it is said, just in the brown hour of twilight, when the owls began to hoot, and the bats to flit about, his attention was attracted by the clamor of carrion crows¹³ hovering about a cypress tree. He looked up, and beheld a bundle tied in a check apron, and hanging in the branches of the tree, with a great vulture perched hard by, as if keeping watch upon it. He leaped with joy; for he recognized his wife's apron and supposed it to contain the household valuables. **I**

"Let us get hold of the property," said he consolingly to himself, "and we will endeavor to do without the woman." As he scrambled up the tree, the vulture spread its wide wings, and sailed off screaming into the deep shadows of the forest. Tom seized the checked apron, but, woeful sight! found nothing but a heart and liver tied up in it! Such, according to this most authentic old story, was all that was to be found of Tom's wife. She had probably attempted to deal with the black man as she had been accustomed to deal with her husband; but though a female scold is generally considered a match for the devil, yet in this instance she appears to have had the worst of it. She must have died game, however; for it is said Tom noticed many prints of cloven feet stamped upon the tree, and found handfuls of hair that looked as if they had been plucked from the coarse black shock of the woodman.

Tom knew his wife's prowess by experience. He shrugged his shoulders, as he looked at the signs of a fierce clapper-clawing. "Egad," said he to himself, "Old Scratch must have had a tough time of it!" **J**

Tom consoled himself for the loss of his property with the loss of his wife, for he was a man of fortitude. He even felt something like gratitude towards the black woodman, who, he considered, had done him a kindness. He sought,

therefore, to cultivate a further acquaintance with him, but for some time without success; the old blacklegs played shy, for, whatever people may think, he is not always to be had for calling for: he knows how to play his cards when pretty sure of his game.

At length, it is said, when delay had whetted Tom's eagerness to the quick, and prepared him to agree to anything rather than not gain the promised treasure, he met the black man one evening in his usual woodsman's dress, with his ax on his shoulder, sauntering along the swamp, and humming a tune. He affected to receive Tom's advances with great indifference, made brief replies, and went on humming his tune.

By degrees, however, Tom brought him to business, and they began to haggle about the terms on which the former was to have the pirate's treasure. There was one condition which need not be mentioned, being generally understood in all cases where the devil grants favors; but there were others about which, though of less importance, he was inflexibly obstinate. He insisted that the money found through his means should be employed in his service. He proposed, therefore, that Tom should employ it in the black traffic; that is to say, that he should fit out a slave ship. This, however, Tom resolutely refused: he was bad enough in all conscience; but the devil himself could not tempt him to turn slave trader.

Finding Tom so squeamish on this point, he did not insist upon it, but proposed, instead, that he should turn usurer; the devil being extremely anxious for the increase of usurers, looking upon them as his peculiar people. To this no objections were made, for it was just to Tom's taste.

"You shall open a broker's shop in Boston next month," said the black man. "I'll do it tomorrow, if you wish," said Tom Walker. "You shall lend money at two percent a month." "Egad, I'll charge four!" replied Tom Walker.

"You shall extort bonds, foreclose mortgages, drive the merchants to bankruptcy—" "I'll drive them to the d——l," cried Tom Walker. "You are the usurer for my money!" said blacklegs with delight. "When will you want the rhino?"¹⁴ "This very night." "Done!" said the devil. "Done!" said Tom Walker. So they shook hands and struck a bargain. **K**

A few days' time saw Tom Walker seated behind his desk in a countinghouse¹⁵ in Boston. His reputation for a ready-moneyed man, who would lend money out for a good consideration, soon spread abroad. Everybody remembers the time of Governor Belcher, when money was particularly scarce. It was a time of paper credit.

The country had been deluged with government bills; the famous Land Bank¹⁶ had been established; there had been a rage for speculating; the people had run mad with schemes for new settlements; for building cities in the wilderness; landjobbers¹⁷ went about with maps of grants, and townships, and Eldorados¹⁸ lying nobody knew where, but which everybody was ready to purchase. In a word, the great speculating fever, which breaks out every now and then in the country, had raged to an alarming degree, and everybody

was dreaming of making sudden fortunes from nothing. As usual the fever had subsided; the dream had gone off, and the imaginary fortunes with it; the patients were left in doleful plight, and the whole country resounded with the consequent cry of "hard times."

At this propitious time of public distress did Tom Walker set up as usurer in Boston. His door was soon thronged by customers. The needy and adventurous, the gambling speculator, the dreaming land-jobber, the thriftless tradesman, the merchant with cracked credit; in short, everyone driven to raise money by desperate means and desperate sacrifices hurried to Tom Walker. Thus Tom was the universal friend of the needy and acted like a "friend in need"; that is to say, he always exacted good pay and good security. In proportion to the distress of the applicant was the hardness of his terms. He accumulated bonds and mortgages; gradually squeezed his customers closer and closer; and sent them at length, dry as a sponge, from his door.

In this way he made money hand over hand, became a rich and mighty man, and exalted his cocked hat upon 'Change. **19** He built himself, as usual, a vast house, out of **ostentation**; but left the greater part of it unfinished and unfurnished, out of parsimony. He even set up a carriage in the fullness of his vainglory, **20** though he nearly starved the horses which drew it; and as the ungreased wheels groaned and screeched on the axletrees, you would have thought you heard the souls of the poor debtors he was squeezing. **L**

As Tom waxed old, however, he grew thoughtful. Having secured the good things of this world, he began to feel anxious about those of the next. He thought with regret on the bargain he had made with his black friend, and set his wits to work to cheat him out of the conditions. He became, therefore, all of a sudden, a violent churchgoer. He prayed loudly and strenuously, as if heaven were to be taken by force of lungs. Indeed, one might always tell when he had sinned most during the week, by the clamor of his Sunday devotion. The quiet Christians who had been modestly and steadfastly traveling Zionward **21** were struck with selfreproach at seeing themselves so suddenly outstripped in their career by this newmade convert. Tom was as rigid in religious as in money matters; he was a stern supervisor and **censurer** of his neighbors, and seemed to think every sin entered up to their account became a credit on his own side of the page. He even talked of the expediency of reviving the persecution of Quakers and Anabaptists. In a word, Tom's zeal became as notorious as his riches. **M**

Still, in spite of all this strenuous attention to forms, Tom had a lurking dread that the devil, after all, would have his due. **22** That he might not be taken unawares, therefore, it is said he always carried a small Bible in his coat pocket. He had also a great folio Bible on his countinghouse desk, and would frequently be found reading it when people called on business; on such occasions he would lay his green spectacles in the book, to mark the place, while he turned round to drive some usurious bargain.

Some say that Tom grew a little crackbrained in his old days, and that fancying his end approaching, he had his horse new shod, saddled and bridled, and buried with his feet uppermost; because he supposed that at the

last day the world would be turned upside down; in which case he should find his horse standing ready for mounting, and he was determined at the worst to give his old friend a run for it.

This, however, is probably a mere old wives' fable. If he really did take such a precaution, it was totally superfluous; at least so says the authentic old legend, which closes his story in the following manner: One hot summer afternoon in the dog days, just as a terrible black thundergust was coming up, Tom sat in his countinghouse, in his white linen cap and India silk morning gown. He was on the point of foreclosing a mortgage, by which he would complete the ruin of an unlucky land speculator for whom he had professed the greatest friendship. The poor land-jobber begged him to grant a few months' indulgence. Tom had grown testy and irritated, and refused another day.

"My family will be ruined and brought upon the parish," said the land-jobber. "Charity begins at home," replied Tom; "I must take care of myself in these hard times." "You have made so much money out of me," said the speculator. Tom lost his patience and his piety. "The devil take me," said he, "if I have made a farthing!"²³

Just then there were three loud knocks at the street door. He stepped out to see who was there. A black man was holding a black horse, which neighed and stamped with impatience. "Tom, you're come for," said the black fellow, gruffly. Tom shrank back, but too late. He had left his little Bible at the bottom of his coat pocket, and his big Bible on the desk buried under the mortgage he was about to foreclose; never was a sinner taken more unawares. The black man whisked him like a child into the saddle, gave the horse the lash, and away he galloped, with Tom on his back, in the midst of the thunderstorm. The clerks stuck their pens behind their ears, and stared after him from the windows. Away went Tom Walker, dashing down the streets; his white cap bobbing up and down, his morning gown fluttering in the wind, and his steed striking fire out of the pavement at every bound. When the clerks turned to look for the black man, he had disappeared.

Tom Walker never returned to foreclose the mortgage. A countryman, who lived on the border of the swamp, reported that in the height of the thundergust he had heard a great clattering of hoofs and a howling along the road, and running to the window caught sight of a figure, such as I have described, on a horse that galloped like mad across the fields, over the hills, and down into the black hemlock swamp toward the old Indian fort; and that shortly after a thunderbolt falling in that direction seemed to set the whole forest in a blaze.

The good people of Boston shook their heads and shrugged their shoulders, but had been so much accustomed to witches and goblins, and tricks of the devil, in all kinds of shapes, from the first settlement of the colony, that they were not so much horror-struck as might have been expected. Trustees were appointed to take charge of Tom's effects. There was nothing, however, to administer upon. On searching his coffers²⁴ all his bonds and mortgages were found reduced to cinders. In place of gold and silver, his iron chest was

filled with chips and shavings; two skeletons lay in his stable instead of his half-starved horses, and the very next day his great house took fire and burnt to the ground. **N**

Such was the end of Tom Walker and his ill-gotten wealth. Let all griping money brokers lay this story to heart. The truth of it is not to be doubted. The very hole under the oak trees whence he dug Kidd's money is to be seen to this day; and the neighboring swamp and old Indian fort are often haunted in stormy nights by a figure on horseback, in morning gown and white cap, which is doubtless the troubled spirit of the usurer. In fact the story has resolved itself into a proverb so prevalent throughout New England, of "The Devil and Tom Walker." _

Text Related Questions

A. IMAGERY

Reread lines 1–15. What details in the description suggest that this is an ill-fated place?

B. IMAGERY

Identify the images in lines 16–30 that help to characterize Tom and his wife. What character traits do these images reveal?

C. SATIRE

In lines 31–37, Irving satirizes scolding women and the institution of marriage. What humorous details indicate this satire?

D. IMAGERY

What kind of mood is established by the description of the swamp in lines 40–47?

E. MAKE INFERENCES

Look again at lines 68 and 77. What can you infer about Tom Walker from his reaction to the swamp and to his grisly discovery of the skull?

F. MAKE INFERENCES

Reread lines 96–105. Why do you think the trees are marked with the men's names?

G. SATIRE

Reread lines 115–118. What do they tell you about the author's attitude toward the activities of the early settlers? What led you to make that inference?

H. GRAMMAR AND STYLE

Irving emphasizes ideas and creates lyricism through the use of parallelism, the repetition of grammatical structures. In lines 173–177, for example, the writer uses parallelism to present three possible fates of Tom’s wife.

I. IMAGERY

Which images in lines 189–192 suggest that Tom’s discovery won’t be a pleasant one?

J. SATIRE

How does Irving use humor and exaggeration to satirize a “female scold” in lines 199–207?

K. SATIRE

Reread lines 232–243. How does Tom compare with the devil in terms of his greed and mercilessness? Decide what comment Irving is making about usurers in general.

L. IMAGERY

Find the images in lines 264–275 that are used to describe both Tom and his clients. What do these images tell you about Tom and his methods?

M. SATIRE

What kind of churchgoer is represented by Tom in lines 276–289? Think about what Irving is suggesting about this kind of individual.

N. IMAGERY

Reread lines 341–345. What message do these images suggest about material possessions and those who seek them?

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1. as articulate . . . gridiron: as clearly separated as the bars of a grill.
 2. puddingstone: a rock consisting of pebbles and gravel cemented together.
 3. termagant (tûr´mE-gEnt): a quarrelsome, scolding woman.
 4. clapper-clawing: scratching or clawing with the fingernails.

5. eyed . . . askance (E-skBns `): looked disapprovingly at the house filled with arguing.
6. bittern: a wading bird with mottled, brownish plumage and a deep, booming cry.
7. incantations: verbal charms or spells recited to produce a magic effect.
8. buccaneering: robbing ships at sea; piracy.
9. presiding . . . Anabaptists: exercising authority over the oppression of Christian groups that the Puritans considered heretical.
10. Old Scratch: a nickname for the devil.
11. a great man . . . Israel: a biblical reference—"Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?" (2 Samuel 3:38)—used, with unconscious irony, by the papers to mean that an important member of God's people on earth had passed away.
12. freebooter: pirate.
13. carrion crows: crows that feed on dead or decaying flesh.
14. rhino: a slang term for money.
15. countinghouse: an office in which a business firm conducts its bookkeeping, correspondence, and similar activities.
16. Land Bank: Boston merchants organized the Land Bank in 1739. Landowners could take out mortgages on their property and then repay the loans with cash or manufactured goods. When the Land Bank was outlawed in 1741, many colonists lost money.
17. land-jobbers: people who buy and sell land for profit.
18. Eldorados: places of fabulous wealth or great opportunity. Early Spanish explorers sought a legendary country named El Dorado, which was rumored to be rich with gold.
19. exalted . . . 'Change: proudly raised himself to a position of importance as a trader on the stock exchange
20. vainglory: boastful, undeserved pride in one's accomplishments or qualities.
21. Zionward: toward heaven.
22. the devil . . . due: a reference to the proverb "Give the devil his due," used to mean "Give even a disagreeable person the credit he or she deserves." Here, of course, the expression is used literally rather than figuratively.

23. farthing: a coin worth one-fourth of a penny, formerly used throughout the British Empire.

24. coffers: safes or strongboxes designed to hold money or other valuable items.

After Reading

Comprehension

1. Recall What character traits do Tom Walker and his wife share?
2. Recall What bargain does Tom make with the stranger in the forest?
3. Summarize How does Tom try to avoid fulfilling his end of the bargain?

Literary Analysis

4. Compare Character Traits As Tom gets older, he begins to worry about his actions and becomes “a violent churchgoer.” But does he really change? Support your opinion with examples from the story. Use a chart like the one shown to collect evidence.

	Before the Bargain	As He Ages
Attitude		
Statements		
Actions		

5. Draw Conclusions In your opinion, is there any way Tom could have escaped the consequences of his deal with the devil? Use evidence from the story and your own knowledge of human nature to support your answer.
6. Interpret Imagery Review the examples of images you recorded as you read the story. How does Irving use each of the following images to support characterization and mood?
 - the description of the trees and the swamp (lines 40–47)
 - the description of the hewn trees (lines 96–102)
 - the description of Tom’s new house (lines 270–272)
 - the description of Tom as a churchgoer (lines 279–289)

7. Analyze Satire

Through statements he makes about Tom Walker, his wife, and his community, what messages is Irving communicating about

- women (lines 31–37)? • the slave trade (lines 224–227)?
- the Puritan attitude (lines 115–118)? • moneylenders (lines 228–230)?

8. Analyze Irony Much of the humor in this tale is based on irony, where what happens or is said is the opposite of what one would expect. Look again at lines 290–296. What is ironic about Tom's mix of Bible study and business?

Literary Criticism

9. Critical Interpretations The story of Tom Walker engaged readers both here and in Europe for many different, and sometimes conflicting, reasons.

Look at the story again through the eyes of each of the following people.

What reasons would you give for recommending the story to others?

- businessman • banker • English critic
- revolutionary • Puritan • American politician

Selection 3: Unit 2, The Transcendentalists

from Woman in the Nineteenth Century

Nonfiction by Margaret Fuller p.394



notable quote “We would have every arbitrary barrier thrown down. We would have every path laid open to woman as freely as to man.”

Did you know that Margaret Fuller . . .

- learned to read when she was 3 years old?
- suffered from nightmares in which she dreamed horses were galloping across her head?
- inspired Edgar Allan Poe to quip, “There are three species: men, women, and Margaret Fuller”?

Margaret Fuller spent much of her life fighting to make women equal members of society. At a time when a woman’s only place was thought to be the small sphere of the home, Fuller became a respected author, a commanding public speaker, a popular journalist, and a key figure in the transcendentalist movement. One literary historian observed that Fuller “transcended virtually every stereotype American women had to endure in the first half of the 19th century.”

A Demanding Childhood Sarah Margaret Fuller was born in Cambridgeport, Massachusetts. Her father, a stern and formidable man, had high expectations for her. When she was only 10 years old, he counseled that excelling “in all things should be your constant aim.” As a teenager, Fuller typically started her studies at five in the morning and sometimes did not finish until eleven at night.

Coming into Her Own Fuller’s father died suddenly when she was 25, and she became a teacher to help support her family. Through a mutual acquaintance, she met Ralph Waldo Emerson, who was much impressed by her intelligence and wit. She began attending meetings of the

Transcendental Club. In 1840, Fuller became the editor of *The Dial*, a short-lived but highly influential literary magazine. Fuller solicited poems, essays, and fiction from leading transcendentalists and wrote much of the content herself.

An Influential Voice In 1844, Fuller started writing the literary column for the *New York Tribune*, perhaps the most widely read newspaper of its day. In addition to reviewing literary works, she addressed social issues such as poverty and slavery. In 1845, Fuller published *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, a revolutionary feminist work that paid tribute to women's intellectual and creative abilities and declared that women must be accepted as equal to men. The first edition sold out in two weeks.

Romance and Tragedy In 1846, the *New York Tribune* sent Fuller to cover civil unrest in Europe. She settled in Rome, where she fell in love with and married Italian aristocrat Giovanni Angelo Ossoli. When revolution broke out in Rome in 1848, Fuller supported the cause by volunteering at a hospital while her husband fought for the republic. The revolution failed, and Fuller, Ossoli, and their young son sailed to the United States in 1850. With New York City almost in sight, their ship hit a sandbar and sank. Fuller, Ossoli, and their son drowned.

What does society Expect of us?

KEY IDEA In the 19th century, society expected women to be loving wives, adoring mothers, and expert housekeepers. Women were *not* expected to be great thinkers; they were to leave the thinking to men. Some women, including Margaret Fuller, rejected these limiting **expectations**.

SURVEY Does society still have different expectations for men and women? Complete the following survey, marking which jobs you think would most likely be held by men, which would mostly likely be held by women, and which would have roughly equal numbers of each. Then write a paragraph discussing what your results might indicate about how gender influences societal expectations.

Survey: Gender and Jobs

Occupation	Mostly Male	Mostly Female	Equal
1. Kindergarten teacher			
2. carpenter			
3. hairstylist			

4. surgeon			
5. firefighter			
6. college professor			
7. personal shopper			
8. architect			

Literary Analysis: Author's Perspective

You know that people often look at a subject from different perspectives. For example, a Vietnam War veteran would bring a unique set of ideas and experiences to a discussion of that war. A person who spent the 1960s protesting that same war would approach the discussion with an entirely different set of beliefs. Author's perspective refers to the distinct combination of ideas, values, and beliefs that influence the way a writer looks at a topic. An author's perspective is rarely stated; instead, you have to look closely at details within the text.

To determine an author's perspective, examine

- the writer's tone, or attitude toward the subject
- details the writer chooses to include or focus on
- how the writer portrays specific individuals

As you read the excerpt from *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, use these elements to help you analyze Margaret Fuller's perspective.

Reading Strategy: Paraphrase Main Ideas

When you read challenging texts like this one, it is important to pay careful attention to the author's main ideas. One way to make sure you're understanding these key points is to paraphrase them, or restate the information in your own words. A good paraphrase is about the same length as the original text but is written in simpler language. As you read, paraphrase the annotated passages to achieve a better understanding of Fuller's main ideas. Record your work in a chart like the one shown.

Fuller's Main Ideas	My Paraphrase
<p>“I was talking on this subject with Miranda, a woman, who, if any in the world could, might speak without heat or bitterness of the position of her sex”</p>	<p>I spoke about this with Miranda. If any woman can talk about gender issues calmly and rationally Miranda can.</p>

Woman in the Nineteenth Century

Margaret Fuller

Background

From 1839 to 1844, Fuller led a series of seminars for women called “Conversations.” She lectured on topics ranging from ethics to art and then asked her listeners to discuss each topic, thus helping the women to recognize their own intellectual abilities. The sessions led Fuller to write *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, in which she insists society accept women and men as equals. Here, Fuller presents her views as a dialogue between herself and the fictional “Miranda,” a woman who, like Fuller, had from childhood been encouraged to exercise her mind.

I was talking on this subject with Miranda, a woman, who, if any in the world could, might speak without heat and bitterness of the position of her sex. Her father was a man who cherished no sentimental reverence for woman, but a firm belief in the equality of the sexes. She was his eldest child, and came to him at an age when he needed a companion. From the time she could speak and go alone, he addressed her not as a plaything, but as a living mind. Among the few verses he ever wrote was a copy addressed to this child, when the first locks were cut from her head, and the reverence expressed on this occasion for that cherished head, he never belied. It was to him the temple of immortal intellect. He respected his child, however, too much to be an indulgent parent. He called on her for clear judgment, for courage, for honor and fidelity; in short, for such virtues as he knew. In so far as he possessed the keys to the wonders of this universe, he allowed free

use of them to her, and by the incentive of a high expectation, he forbade, as far as possible, that she should let the privilege lie idle. **A**

Thus this child was early led to feel herself a child of the spirit. She took her place easily, not only in the world of organized being, but in the world of mind. A dignified sense of self-dependence was given as all her portion, **1** and she found it a sure anchor. Herself securely anchored, her relations with others were established with equal security. She was fortunate in a total absence of those charms which might have drawn to her bewildering flatteries, and in a strong electric nature, which repelled those who did not belong to her; and attracted those who did.

With men and women her relations were noble,—affectionate without passion, intellectual without coldness. The world was free to her, and she lived freely in it. Outward adversity came, and inward conflict, but that faith and self-respect had early been awakened which must always lead at last, to an outward serenity and an inward peace. **B**

Of Miranda I had always thought as an example, that the restraints upon the sex were insuperable **2** only to those who think them so, or who noisily strive to break them. She had taken a course of her own, and no man stood in her way.

Many of her acts had been unusual, but excited no uproar. Few helped, but none checked her, and the many men, who knew her mind and her life, showed to her confidence, as to a brother, gentleness as to a sister. And not only refined, but very coarse men approved and aided one in whom they saw resolution and clearness of design. Her mind was often the leading one, always effective. **C**

When I talked with her upon these matters, and had said very much what I have written, she smilingly replied: “and yet we must admit that I have been fortunate, and this should not be. My good father’s early trust gave the first bias, and the rest followed of course. It is true that I have had less outward aid, in after years, than most women, but that is of little consequence. Religion was early awakened in my soul, a sense that what the soul is capable to ask it must attain, and that, though I might be aided and instructed by others, I must depend on myself as the only constant friend. This self dependence, which was honored in me, is deprecated as a fault in most women. They are taught to learn their rule from without, not to unfold it from within. **D**

“This is the fault of man, who is still vain, and wishes to be more important to woman than, by right, he should be.” “Men have not shown this disposition toward you,” I said. “No! because the position I early was enabled to take was one of self-reliance. And were all women as sure of their wants as I was, the result would be the same. But they are so overloaded with precepts by guardians, who think that nothing is so much to be dreaded for a woman as originality of thought or character, that their minds are impeded by doubts till they lose their chance of fair free proportions. The difficulty is to get them to the point from which they shall naturally develop self-respect, and learn self-help. **E**

“Once I thought that men would help to forward this state of things more than I do now. I saw so many of them wretched in the connections they had formed in weakness and vanity. They seemed so glad to esteem women whenever they could.

“‘The soft arms of affection,’ said one of the most discerning spirits, ‘will not suffice for me, unless on them I see the steel bracelets of strength.’”

But early I perceived that men never, in any extreme of despair, wished to be women. On the contrary they were ever ready to taunt one another at any sign of weakness, with,

Art thou not like the women, who—

The passage ends various ways, according to the occasion and rhetoric of the speaker. When they admired any woman they were inclined to speak of her as “above her sex.” Silently I observed this, and feared it argued a rooted scepticism, which for ages had been fastening on the heart, and which only an age of miracles could eradicate. Ever I have been treated with great sincerity; and I look upon it as a signal instance of this, that an intimate friend of the other sex said, in a fervent moment, that I “deserved in some star to be a man.” He was much surprised when I disclosed my view of my position and hopes, when I declared my faith that the feminine side, the side of love, of beauty, of holiness, was now to have its full chance, and that, if either were better, it was better now to be a woman, for even the slightest achievement of good was furthering an especial work of our time. He smiled incredulously. “She makes the best she can of it,” thought he. “Let Jews believe the pride of Jewry, but I am of the better sort, and know better.”³ F

Another used as highest praise, in speaking of a character in literature, the words “a manly woman.” “So in the noble passage of Ben Jonson:

*‘I meant the day-star should not brighter ride,
Nor shed like influence from its lucent seat;
I meant she should be courteous, facile, sweet,
Free from that solemn vice of greatness, pride;
I meant each softest virtue there should meet,
Fit in that softer bosom to abide,
Only a learned and a manly soul,
I purposed her, that should with even powers,
The rock, the spindle, and the shears control
Of destiny, and spin her own free hours.’”⁴*

“Methinks,” said I, “you are too fastidious in objecting to this. Jonson in using the word ‘manly’ only meant to heighten the picture of this, the true, the intelligent fate, with one of the deeper colors.”

“And yet,” said she, “so invariable is the use of this word where a heroic quality is to be described, and I feel so sure that persistence and courage are the most womanly no less than the most manly qualities, that I would exchange these words for others of a larger sense at the risk of marring the fine tissue of the verse. Read ‘A heavenward and instructed soul,’ and I should be satisfied. Let it not be said, wherever there is energy or creative genius, ‘She has a masculine mind.’” _

Text Related Questions:

A. PARAPHRASE MAIN IDEAS

Paraphrase lines 2–4. What were Miranda’s father’s views on gender equality?

B. AUTHOR’S PERSPECTIVE

Consider Fuller’s **tone** in lines 15–26. What can you **infer** about the traits Fuller found admirable?

C. PARAPHRASE MAIN IDEAS

Paraphrase the main idea Fuller states in lines 27–29. Of what does Fuller see Miranda as an “example”?

D. PARAPHRASE MAIN IDEAS

Paraphrase lines 42–44. How is Miranda different from most women of her time?

E. AUTHOR’S PERSPECTIVE

Consider the **details** Fuller chooses to focus on. By contrasting Miranda’s upbringing with that of most 19th-century women, what type of upbringing is Fuller advocating?

F. PARAPHRASE MAIN IDEAS

Paraphrase lines 65–68 in your chart. What way of thinking does Miranda describe, and how easy does she think it will be to reverse?

-
1. **all her portion**: something that she had a right to expect.
 2. **insuperable**: incapable of being overcome
 3. **‘She makes . . . know better’**: Miranda’s male friend uses a religious slur to discount women.
 4. **‘I meant . . . free hours’**: These lines are taken from the poem “On Lucy, Countess of Bedford.” Their author, Ben Jonson (1573?–1637), was an English playwright and poet.
-

After Reading

Comprehension

1. **Recall** What did Miranda's father believe in regard to the equality of the sexes?
2. **Summarize** According to Miranda, how did her relationship with her father shape her character?
3. **Clarify** What do the men Miranda describes mean when they comment that a woman they admire is "above her sex"?

Literary Analysis

4. **Analyze Main Ideas** Examine the main ideas you **paraphrased** as you read. Then reread the selection's last two paragraphs. What is Fuller's main point about "heroic" qualities such as persistence, confidence, and creativity? Use your own paraphrases as well as specific lines from the text to support your answer.
5. **Examine Author's Perspective** Recall that Fuller was in the Transcendental Club, and think about the ideals that this group embraced. Through her description of Miranda, what was Fuller saying about the traits a woman needed in order to transcend society's **expectations**? Restate Fuller's perspective in one or two sentences. Consider the following as you formulate your answer:
 - Miranda's statement that women "are taught to learn their rule without, not to unfold it from within." (lines 43–44)
 - The contrast between Miranda's upbringing and that of women "so overloaded with precepts by guardians . . . that their minds are impeded by doubts." (lines 50–52)
6. **Draw Conclusions About the Author's Technique** Why might Fuller have chosen to present her views as a dialogue between herself and the fictional Miranda, instead of simply stating her beliefs outright? Explain how the dialogue format helps the author achieve her **purpose**. Cite at least one example from the text to support your analysis.
7. **Compare Texts** Compare Fuller's main ideas with the beliefs Ralph Waldo Emerson sets forth in "Self-Reliance" (page 360). What common elements do the two texts share? In what ways does their focus differ? Cite examples.

Literary Criticism

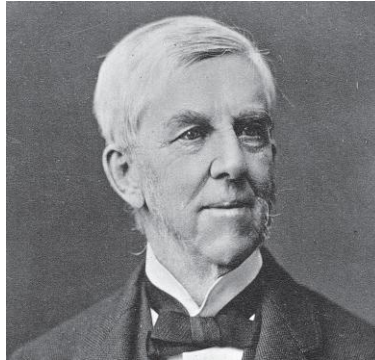
8. **Historical Context** A friend of Fuller's once described her as possessing "what in woman is generally called a masculine mind; that is, its action was determined by ideas rather than sentiments." Was this just a 19th-century attitude, or is it still prevalent today? Do contemporary Americans still believe that men are governed by reason while women are driven by emotion? Explain your answer.

Selection 4: Unit 2, The Firesides Poets

The Chambered Nautilus

Old Ironsides

Poetry by Oliver Wendell Holmes p.340



notable quote “Man’s mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimensions.”

Did you know that Oliver Wendell Holmes . . .

- dropped out of law school because it bored him?
- became dean of the Harvard Medical School?
- called the subconscious mind “the underground workshop of thought” 20 years before Freud published his study of the unconscious?

Oliver Wendell Holmes

1809–1894

Many people climb the ladder of success, but few make their mark in two very different fields. Oliver Wendell Holmes was both a prize-winning physician and a wildly popular poet. His discovery of the contagious nature of puerperal (“childbed”) fever changed the practice of medicine. And his verse was so beloved that he was frequently called upon to write poems for public occasions.

A Cultural Elite Holmes grew up in a family steeped in history and tradition. He was descended from prominent Boston families and early Dutch settlers. His father, a Calvinist minister in Cambridge, Massachusetts, nurtured his interests in books, religion, and nature. “I am very thankful,” wrote Holmes, “that the first part of my life was not passed shut in between high walls and treading the unimpressible and unsympathetic pavement.”

Literary Triumph At 15, Holmes enrolled at Phillips Andover Academy, where he impressed his teachers by translating the Roman poet Virgil’s *Aeneid*. After receiving a bachelor’s degree and a medical degree from Harvard University, he entered private practice in Boston. Holmes achieved literary stardom at the age of 21 with the appearance of his poem “Old Ironsides.” Written to protest the

planned destruction of a ship that fought in the War of 1812, the poem won Holmes instant fame. Following its publication, the USS *Constitution* was returned to active duty.

Talent for Talk After his first book of poems was published in 1836, Holmes joined the lecture circuit, where he entranced audiences with his ready wit. He was equally charming in the classroom, causing his students at Harvard Medical School to greet his lectures with “a mighty shout and stamp of applause.” Holmes’s eloquence was also on display at the Saturday Club, a group including Ralph Waldo Emerson and Nathaniel Hawthorne. The writers met regularly to share their latest works.

Renaissance Man In addition to poetry, Holmes wrote three novels, a biography of Emerson, and numerous essays. Many of the essays appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, a magazine edited by Holmes’s friend James Russell Lowell. Printed under the title “The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table,” these essays combined prose and poetry and explored the themes of human destiny and freedom.

When is it time to Move On?

Sometimes people have to choose between cherishing the past and looking toward the future. For example, when you move out of your parents’ house, will you expect them to keep your room exactly as it is or to convert it to a home office?

Change can produce a renewed sense of well-being as well as a sense of loss.

DISCUSS Working with a partner, list situations or occasions in life when one must decide between holding on to the past and making a change. In each case, what are the benefits of either choice? After discussing this question with your partner, share your conclusions with others.

Literary Analysis: Meter

Meter is one of the tools used by poets to make language memorable and pleasing to the ear. It is defined as the repetition of a regular rhythmic unit in a line of poetry. Each unit, known as a **foot**, has one stressed syllable and either one or two unstressed syllables. The two basic types of metrical feet used by Holmes in these poems are the **iamb**, in which an unstressed syllable is followed by a stressed syllable, and the **trochee**, in which a stressed syllable is followed by an unstressed syllable.

Two words are used to describe the meter of a line. The first word identifies the type of metrical foot—iambic, trochaic—and the second word indicates the number of feet in a line:

monometer (one), **dimeter** (two), **trimeter** (three), **tetrameter**

(four), **pentameter** (five), **hexameter** (six), and so forth. Here

is a line from “Old Ironsides” with the meter marked:

Her deck, once red with heroes’ blood

As you read these two poems by Holmes, note the meter in each and consider what it contributes to the poem's meaning and aesthetic appeal.

Reading Skill: Make Inferences

Making inferences involves “reading between the lines”—making logical guesses based on evidence in the text to figure out what is not directly stated. As you read these two poems by Holmes, you will need to make inferences to get at the author's meaning. For each poem, create a chart like the one shown in p.341.

Old Ironsides

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Ay, tear her tattered ensign¹ down!
Long has it waved on high,
And many an eye has danced to see
That banner in the sky;
Beneath it rung the battle shout,
And burst the cannon's roar; —
The meteor of the ocean air
Shall sweep the clouds no more.
Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,
Where knelt the vanquished foe,
When winds were hurrying o'er the flood,
And waves were white below,
No more shall feel the victor's tread,
Or know the conquered knee;—
The harpies² of the shore shall pluck
The eagle of the sea! **C**
Oh, better that her shattered hulk
Should sink beneath the wave;
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,
And there should be her grave;

Nail to the mast her holy flag,
Set every threadbare sail,
And give her to the god of storms,
The lightning and the gale! **D**

TEXT RELATED QUESTIONS

C. METER

What is the basic meter of this poem? Notice which lines are longer and which are shorter.

D. MAKE INFERENCES

Reread the third stanza. Based on what has been said in previous stanzas about the ship's gloried past, do you think the speaker is being sincere or **ironic** about the fate of Old Ironsides? Explain.

1. **ensign**: flag.
 2. **harpies**: evil monsters from Greek mythology that are half woman and half bird.
-

After Reading

Comprehension

1. **Recall** What event involving Old Ironsides took place during the war?
2. **Recall** According to the speaker, what should be the ship's fate?
6. **Identify Tone** The attitude that a writer takes toward a particular subject is called **tone**. How would you describe the tone of the poem? What words and figures of speech help establish this tone? Use a chart like the one shown in p. 345 to record your answers.
7. **Interpret Meter** Review the metric pattern you identified in "Old Ironsides." Then read the poem aloud.

How does this meter reflect the poem's subject matter? Explain.

Literary Criticism

- 8. Author's Style** Recall from Holmes's biography on page 340 that the poem "Old Ironsides" was instrumental in saving the USS *Constitution*. What techniques and details used in the poem might have motivated readers to act? Cite evidence to support your answer.